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Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Letter dated 13 March 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as representative of the current Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the thirty-third ministerial meeting of the Committee, held from 5 to 9 December 2011 at Bangui, Central African Republic (see annex).

I should like to inform you in this context that on 8 December, the ministerial meeting adopted a Declaration on a road map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa (attached).

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter and its annexes as a document of the General Assembly under item 96 (e) of the preliminary list for the sixty-seventh session, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Charles Armel **Doubane**
Permanent Representative

* A/67/50.

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Annex to the letter dated 13 March 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

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A. Introduction

1. The thirty-third ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Bangui, Central African Republic, from 5 to 9 December 2011.

2. The following member States participated in the meeting: the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, the Gabonese Republic, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

3. The secretariat of the Committee was comprised of members of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). The Secretary-General of the United Nations was represented by His Excellency Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Central Africa and Head of UNOC A.

4. The following United Nations entities took part in the proceedings as observers: UNOCA, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (CNUDHD-AC).

5. The following entities also participated as observers: the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

6. The meeting of experts opened with a ceremony which included, inter alia, a statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, who reported to the Committee on the mandate of UNOCA and informed the Committee that the responsibilities of the Secretariat of the Committee had been transferred from UNREC to UNOCA. He also advised the Committee that Mr. Paul Goa Zoumanigui, senior policy advisor and head of the UNOCA political unit, had been appointed Secretary of the Committee. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Central Africa and Head of UNOCA also thanked the Director of UNREC, Mr. Ivor Richard Fung, the outgoing Secretary of the Committee, for the important work he had done in that capacity.

7. The opening ceremony featured:

- A message from the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States, read out by the Special Representative of the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic, His Excellency Albert Akendengue;
- A message from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, read out by the Special Representative and Head of the African Union Liaison Office in the Central African Republic, Her Excellency Hawa Youssouf Ahmed;
- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read out by his Special Representative to Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, Mr. Abou Moussa;

- A statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Communities of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, His Excellency Manual Salvador dos Ramos;
- A statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad, General Antoine Gambi.

8. The closing ceremony featured:

- A closing statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Central Africa and Chief of UNOCA;
- A closing speech by General Antoine Gambi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad.

B. Summary of the proceedings

I. Election of the Bureau

9. General Antoine Gambi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad, was elected Chairman of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa by acclamation.

10. The Committee also elected the following countries as members of the Bureau:

- First Vice-Chairman: Republic of Burundi
- Second Vice-Chairman: Republic of the Congo
- Rapporteur: Republic of Equatorial Guinea

II. Adoption of the agenda

11. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Election of the Bureau
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Report of the outgoing Bureau
4. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa
5. Implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative:
   - Status report on signatures and ratifications of the Kinshasa Convention;
   - Implementation of the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa
6. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa:
   - Implementation of the Brazzaville Programme of Priority Activities (proliferation of small arms and light weapons and disarmament of civilian populations);

- Briefing by the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

7. Promotion of peace and combating crime in Central Africa:

   - Maritime piracy in Central Africa;

   - Illegal exploitation of natural resources

8. The impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa

9. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/189

10. Implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) on women and peace and security, and General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

11. Briefing by entities with observer status with the Committee: the African Union, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (CNUDHD-AC), United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

12. Report of the Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) on the institutional evolution of the subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms, including the status of ratifications of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security Council (COPAX) and of non-aggression and mutual assistance agreements, and the Central Africa Multinational Force (FOMAC), and on the development of strategic partnerships

13. Review of the financial situation of the Committee: Implementation of the Libreville Declaration by member States

14. Preparations for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

15. Place and date of the next meeting

16. Other matters

17. Adoption of the report of the thirty-third ministerial meeting.

III. Report of the outgoing Bureau

12. The Committee took note of the report of the outgoing Bureau read by its Rapporteur. It commended the members of the Bureau on the high quality of their work, and, in particular, their efforts to promote the signing of the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and

Assembly (Kinshasa Convention) and the substantive and material preparations for the thirty-third ministerial meeting, carried out in close cooperation with UNOCA in its capacity as secretariat of the Standing Advisory Committee.

IV. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

13. Given the differing readings of paragraph 84 of the report of the thirty-second ministerial meeting, the delegations decided that the Economic Community of Central African States would continue to submit a report on that item at future meetings. With regard to the ultimate purpose of the report, the Committee agreed that it should contribute to the elaboration of specific recommendations to be implemented with the support of ECCAS and other partners. In that context, the delegates apprised the Committee of the evolving political situations, domestic and cross-border security situations and governance, humanitarian and human rights concerns in their respective countries.

14. The discussions pointed up contrasting developments in the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa since the Committee's last meeting. On the one hand, significant progress has been achieved in the consolidation of democratic processes and the normal functioning of institutions. On the other hand, certain States in the subregion have had to deal with worrisome security situations.

15. In the political sphere, the period under review was marked by the preparation and organization of various elections in certain countries in the subregion.

16. With regard to domestic and cross-border security, while the calm that now prevails in some conflict zones is welcome, Central Africa has also had to face a certain number of threats to peace and security, including the resurgence of rampant banditry and acts of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and residual pockets of insecurity in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

17. Member States have undertaken substantial efforts with regard to governance, the humanitarian situation and human rights. Relevant legal and institutional instruments governing these matters continue to be adopted and implemented at the national level.

18. The geopolitical and security situation, country by country, is as follows:

- **Republic of Angola**

19. There is a climate of peace and stability throughout the Republic of Angola. An extensive updating of the voter registry is now under way in preparation for the 2012 elections.

- **Republic of Burundi**

20. The delegation of Burundi briefed the Committee regarding social and political developments in the country and noted that since the last presidential elections the security situation has been relatively calm. However, there are pockets of insecurity fuelled by armed bands across the country. The Al-Shabaab terrorists have also stated their intention to commit terrorist acts targeting Burundi. The

Government and people are pooling their efforts to maintain peace, security and stability in the country.

21. The delegation also informed the Committee of some useful steps introduced to guarantee public calm and promote development in the country. An independent human rights commission has been set up, and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is ongoing. The law on political parties was adopted by the Parliament and promulgated by His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza, Head of State and President of the Republic.

22. With regard to persistent rumours in certain quarters of an emerging rebellion, the Government of Burundi has just published a memorandum on the national security and political situation to elucidate the matter both within the country and internationally.

23. Burundi just hosted the parliamentary session of the legislative assembly of the East African Community, which gives an indication of the favourable security situation in the country. It was the first international conference on the Lake Tanganyika basin, and was followed by the thirteenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the East African Community. Burundi presided over the Community from 30 November 2010 to 1 December 2011.

24. A meeting of intelligence chiefs of the member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region was also held in Bujumbura in November, and measures were taken to address actions by negative forces operating in partnership with terrorist groups based primarily in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

25. Burundi has continued to host delegations paying official visits to Bujumbura, including one by His Excellency Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa. There have also been regular meetings between the Head of State and his Rwandan counterpart, His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda.

26. Moreover, Burundi contributes to the quest for peace in Somalia and other countries by sending troops on United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions, in particular to Haiti, Côte d'Ivoire and Sudan. Finally, the delegation of Burundi stated that the country would be willing to host the next meeting of the Committee.

- **The Republic of Cameroon**

27. The political highlight was the presidential election, which took place on 9 October 2011, resulting in the re-election of the incumbent, His Excellency Paul Biya. It was the first vote organized by Elections Cameroon, an independent organization tasked with organizing elections in Cameroon.

28. The outcome was accepted by all candidates, although they noted some minor shortcomings owing to the very recent inception of Elections Cameroon. The Supreme Court convening in its capacity as Constitutional Court and international observers concluded that these shortcomings were not of a nature to undermine the credibility of the election results.

29. Cameroon has undertaken reforms to its electoral system, and consultations to that end are under way.

30. During the inaugural address by the President of the Republic before the National Assembly, the consolidation of the social and political climate was reaffirmed with the announcement that some institutions provided for in the Constitution of 16 January 1996 would be established, including the Senate and the Constitutional Court, and that measures would be taken to improve the operations of Elections Cameroon, launch a major public works programme beginning in January 2012 and address embezzlement of public funds and corruption.

31. Overall, the security situation is calm and poses no threat to peace in the subregion. Nonetheless, it must be recognized that while Cameroon has made every effort to hold onto its major achievements of peace and stability, during the period under review, there have been threats related to the infiltration of the Islamic sect Boko Haram and weapons originating in Libya and incidents occurring recently on the border of Cameroon and the Central African Republic involving undisciplined Central African soldiers. Fortunately, these incidents were quickly brought under control thanks to bilateral contacts. The border between the two countries was reopened on 27 November 2011.

32. Some acts of piracy were recently perpetrated in the Bakassi region, following an attack on a banking institution in Douala. One of the attacks occurred on 9 October 2011, resulting in the death of two gendarmes who had been providing security during elections in the area around Isangélé, in the south-west. There have also been attacks by independent armed gangs (the African Marine Commando and Bakassi Freedom Fighters).

33. In the social sphere, the Mission to Regulate the Supply of Consumer Products, established by the Head of State on 1 February 2011, is now operational. It is currently organizing markets on a regular basis at which basic necessities are made available to the public at very competitive prices.

34. In application of Act No. 2005/006 of 27 July 2005 on the status of refugees in Cameroon, on 28 November 2011, the Head of State signed Decree No. 2011/389 on the organization and operation of agencies addressing refugee issues in Cameroon. This decree will permit Cameroon to provide for the promotion of the rights of refugees, with the cooperation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, through two newly established bodies: the Refugee Status Eligibility Commission and the Commission for Refugee Return.

35. As part of the effort to reduce youth unemployment, 25,000 young graduates were recruited to work in the Cameroonian civil service and on large-scale construction projects.

- **Central African Republic**

36. Following the inauguration of the President of the Republic on 15 March 2011, establishment of all democratic institutions has been a major feature of the political scene in the Central African Republic, in particular the formation of a broad and inclusive Government encompassing all of the country's prime movers, including civil society and the political opposition. There has been gender mainstreaming, with 6 women now in the Government as against 4 in the previous one, and the establishment of a National Assembly that now includes 13 woman deputies as against 9 in the previous one.

37. The Government signed a ceasefire and peace agreement with the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP) rebels, as a step toward that group's accession to the 2008 Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

38. The President of the Republic also went ahead, in June 2011, with the launch of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in the north-western part of the country, which demobilized 4,000 ex-combatants. The operations will continue in the central part of the country and in the north-east, where the rebellions of the CPJP and the Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR) are smouldering.

39. The clashes in September 2011 between the CPJP and the UFDR, which are dominated by the Rounga and Goula ethnic groups, respectively, resulted in 50 fatalities and the displacement of some 4,000 people.

40. In the aftermath of the ceasefire signed between these two movements on 8 October 2011, a peace caravan, organized at the initiative of the Mediator of the Republic, travelled the length and breadth of the Bamingui Bangoran, Vakaga and Haute Kotto regions, with a view to reducing tensions and promoting peaceful coexistence among local communities.

41. The forum of African ambassadors and the Mediator of the Republic have offered their good offices to settle the conflict involving the Central African Republic and a rebellion led by Baba Ladé of Chad, in order to bring peace to the regions where the combatants are rampaging.

42. The United States Government has set up a coalition contingent, deploying United States soldiers in the south-eastern part of the country to fight the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which has been declared a terrorist organization by the African Union.

43. The African Union has also authorized deployment of a regional intervention force under the auspices of a special envoy.

44. In addition, the Peacebuilding Mission, which participates in the architecture for peace in Central Africa, is planning a gradual, incremental withdrawal, with 2013 as its target date, with operations to be carried on by the Forces armées centrafricaines.

45. In the area of cross-border security, the Central African authorities continue to work to combat trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances.

46. On the economic front, the Government hosted a round table with development partners with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on 16 and 17 June in Brussels, Belgium, in order to raise the awareness of the international community on financing needs for programmes contained in the second poverty reduction strategy paper.

47. The Central African Republic's economic prospects may be hampered by the decision of the AREVA group to postpone exploitation of uranium resources in Bakouma and the delay in developing limestone deposits in Bobassa.

48. The Central African Republic has resolved to make instability a thing of the past and put political and military upheaval and disturbances behind it.

49. With domestic uprisings now consigned to history, the primary sources of insecurity in the Central African Republic are related to turbulence originating abroad. These situations raise the issue of the State's sovereign control over all of its territory, and also of course represent a subregional threat.

50. More than ever, the Central African Republic is in need of the support of the international community to calm these last hot spots of unrest and focus on rebuilding. Unless there is peace and security, there can be no economic development beneficial to the population as a whole.

51. The Committee has expressed its grave concern about the Chad-based rebellion led by General Baba Ladé that is taking root in the central part of the Central African Republic and working to spread its influence to other parts of the country.

52. It has asked General Baba Ladé and his men to leave the territory of the Central African Republic unconditionally and without delay.

53. It welcomes the steps taken by the African Union and other partners of the States affected by the presence of the Ugandan rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army to eliminate this terrorist armed group.

54. In response to the intervention by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad on the fight against terrorism in Central Africa, the Committee adopted the Road Map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa. A copy of the Declaration is attached to the present report, and it will be on the agenda at the thirty-fourth meeting of the Committee.

- **Republic of the Congo**

55. The political and security situation in the Republic of the Congo is stable. The consolidation of democracy has been reinforced with the successful conclusion of the partial senatorial elections of 9 October 2011. The successful conduct of the voting process was acknowledged by the opposition. That augurs well for the legislative elections of 2012.

56. On the humanitarian front, the Government continues to assist large numbers of refugees, particularly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

57. Tripartite agreements among the Congo, the countries of origin of refugees and asylum seekers and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are being implemented with respect for the obligations of all parties.

58. Within that framework, the second tripartite meeting between the Congo, the Republic of Angola and UNHCR on the situation of Angolan refugees living in the Congo was held from 18 to 20 October 2011 in Pointe-Noire.

59. That meeting established a timetable of activities for the voluntary repatriation of those refugees, in particular 72 of them who indicated their intention of returning to their country of origin.

60. With respect to refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, visits to the areas of return by the tripartite technical working group confirmed a definite improvement in security conditions. There was a significant increase in the number of persons registering their intent to return.

61. The voluntary repatriation of Congolese refugees living in Gabon also took place, in collaboration with UNHCR and the Gabonese Government. In that regard, more than 800 Congolese refugees were repatriated, while others opted to remain in Gabon, choosing alternative solutions, in conformity with the provisions of the relevant international legal instruments.

62. In addition, on 11 November 2011, the Government of the Republic of Gabon declared the cessation of refugee status for former Congolese combatants living on its territory.

- **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

63. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has continued its efforts to preserve a climate of peace and stability throughout the territory.

64. There is one major political event to report: the combined presidential and legislative elections held on 28 November 2011, as required by the National Independent Electoral Commission. Generally speaking, the voting took place without incident, despite a few irregularities observed here and there. The Congolese people are awaiting the announcement of the results two weeks from now.

65. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is involved in the preparatory process for the 14th Summit of the International Organization of la Francophonie and of the 28th Permanent Council of la Francophonie, in February 2012, in Kinshasa.

66. With respect to the security situation, the situation on the ground has shown remarkable progress, except for the three provinces in the east: North Kivu, South Kivu and Orientale where there are still several areas of insecurity and pockets of resistance on the part of isolated armed groups such as the LRA and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), which are struggling to survive.

67. With respect to promoting peace, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a member of ECCAS, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, inter alia, has committed itself to a number of agreements that promote the free circulation of people and goods. Concerning the promotion of disarmament and programmes to limit weapons in the subregion, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has destroyed 314,000 weapons of all calibres. Moreover, the country has set up provincial centres for marking as of February 2012, to be followed by weapons collection. A National Acton Plan on small arms and light weapons has been developed for a period of five years.

68. At the diplomatic level, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is continuing to strengthen its relations with its neighbours.

69. With respect to the humanitarian situation, there has been a favourable evolution in the eastern part of the country.

- **Gabonese Republic**

70. The overall situation in the Gabonese Republic continues to be peaceful and stable. With regard to the political situation, the Gabonese Republic will hold legislative elections on 17 December 2011. The National Autonomous Electoral Commission validated 475 candidacies. Approximately ten different parties,

including the Majorité Républicaine pour l'Emergence as well as the opposition, will participate.

71. On the diplomatic front, Gabon's two-year term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council ends on 31 December 2011. During its membership, Gabon played an active role in the Security Council's consideration of issues of peace and security. The Gabonese Republic contributed to the adoption of resolutions, decisions and recommendations related to the Council's mandate, with a particular concern for issues and threats linked to peace and security in Central Africa.

72. The Gabonese Republic also played an active role in advancing Security Council debates on the thematic items at the core of its agenda.

73. Concerning humanitarian matters, 11 November 2011 marked the cessation of refugee and asylum-seeker status for Congolese nationals who have lived in Gabon since the civil war of 1997-1999.

74. The Government of Gabon has worked with the Government of the Congo and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to implement the voluntary repatriation of Congolese nationals.

75. As part of its preparations to co-host with Equatorial Guinea the Africa Cup of Nations Football Championship, to be held from 21 January to 12 February 2012, in 2010 the Government of Gabon began the recruitment of 9,000 youth from across the country to join the country's defence and security forces. Among the aims of that operation were to ensure freedom of movement and to protect people and property during the games.

- **Republic of Equatorial Guinea**

76. Since the last meeting of the Committee in Sao Tome and Principe, political activities in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea have focused on five main events:

- the election of His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo as Chair of the African Union for the period from January 2011 to January 2012;
- preparation for the 17th African Union Summit in Malabo (in the city of Sipopo) from the end of June to the beginning of July 2011, on the theme of: "Accelerating Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development";
- adoption of a new Constitution after a referendum held on 13 November 2011, with the aim of strengthening democracy and development in the country by limiting the president to two seven-year terms of office, as well as creating the position of Vice-President, establishing a Senate, a People's Defence Committee and a Tax Audit Court to ensure the transparent use of revenue and natural resources;
- preparations for the preparatory ministerial meeting for the Africa-South America Summit to be held from 21-22 November 2011;
- the inauguration of the Basilica of Notre Dame de Guadalupe in Mongomo in December 2011.

77. All those events were highly successful on all levels, especially with respect to defence and security.

78. In terms of bilateral cooperation, Equatorial Guinea focused in particular on strengthening its relations with South Africa, Angola, Sao Tome and Principe, the Gabonese Republic, the Republic of Cameroon, Nigeria, and in general with Africa as a whole.

79. During the period under review, both domestic and border security have been characterized by stability and normal functioning of the national security services. Equatorial Guinea has succeeded in controlling the influx of migrants onto its territory and in stemming the rise of banditry in its large cities.

80. On another theme, for the past four years the Government of His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo has been implementing a Plan of Action for the Economic and Social Development of Equatorial Guinea, Horizon 2020, adopted at the second national economic conference in 2007. Among the primary strategic areas of this Plan, which fits perfectly with the Millennium Development Goals, are diversification of the economy and poverty reduction with a focus on improving basic social services such as education, health, housing and the advancement of women from a gender perspective, including through infrastructure development and expansion of the new information and communication technologies sector.

81. As a member of the African Union Commission, the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) and ECCAS, and owing to the determination of President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who has worked tirelessly to consolidate peace and stability in Africa and especially in Central Africa, Equatorial Guinea has recently ratified most of the agreements pertaining to those organizations.

82. In addition, Equatorial Guinea has been actively preparing for the Africa Cup of Nations, which it will co-host with Gabon in January and February 2012. All measures have been taken to ensure that the competition takes place under optimal conditions.

- **Republic of Rwanda**

83. Since the last meeting of the Committee, the overall situation in Rwanda has been characterized at the domestic level by stability and normal functioning of its institutions and by progress at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

84. At the domestic level, since the last presidential election the country has been engaged in the consolidation of democracy and economic and social development.

85. Domestic and cross-border security has continued to be maintained efficiently. The voluntary return of refugees and former combatants from the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda is eloquent proof.

86. Bilateral and multilateral relations between Rwanda and the member countries of the Committee have improved in recent months. His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi, and His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, made State visits to Kigali in October and November 2011 respectively.

87. At the multilateral level, Rwanda's commitment to strengthening peace and stability in its subregion is evident from its increased cooperation in the context of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (ECGLC), the Economic Community of Eastern Africa and the International Conference on the Great Lakes

Region. In this context, Rwanda hosted high level meetings during which matters of peace and security were discussed.

88. In March and June 2011, two ministerial meetings of the Council of Foreign Affairs of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, were held respectively in Rubavu and Bujumbura. In September 2011, the Ministers of Defence and Security of countries members of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region met in Kigali. In November 2011, the United Nations held a high-level meeting in Kigali on "Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Countries: The Experience of Rwanda".

89. With respect to economic matters, despite the difficult situation, the Government took measures to encourage investment and improve the macroeconomic situation to reduce poverty and to support the construction and modernization of public infrastructure, as well as to implement projects in the area of rural development, water management, energy, education, health and food security.

90. A definitive solution to the question of Rwandan refugees is near. The Executive Committee of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, Rwanda and their countries of refuge are in the process of implementing the cessation clause on 31 December 2011, which will enter into force on 30 June 2012.

- **Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe**

91. The overall political situation in the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe was one of calm, the normal functioning of institutions, and stability in the aftermath of the presidential elections held in July and August 2011. Although there were certain verbal exchanges, the elections took place under good conditions. The outcome of the vote was the election of the country's first President, His Excellency Mr. Manuel Pinto da Costa, paving the way for a period of cohabitation that has so far unfolded in a climate of dialogue and harmony.

92. With respect to governance, the Government is pursuing a policy of reform in the justice, defence and security sectors.

93. On the economic level, despite the difficult situation, exacerbated by the present international financial crisis, the Government implemented a number of measures aimed at improving the macroeconomic situation in order to reduce poverty, combat corruption and support the construction and modernization of public infrastructure. Projects were also begun in the areas of rural development, and in the sectors of water, energy, education, health and food security.

- **Republic of Chad**

94. There has been remarkable progress in the overall situation in Chad since the Committee's last meeting. With respect to domestic politics, the dialogue between the Government and the opposition has yielded positive results. Several hundred political prisoners were granted amnesty during the fiftieth anniversary celebrations held on 11 January 2011. In a similar spirit, the electoral cycle began with the legislative vote on 12 February 2011 and continued with the presidential election on 24 April 2011. His Excellency Mr. Idriss Deby Itno was re-elected.

95. Concerning the legislative vote, the ruling party, the Mouvement patriotique pour le salut (MPS) obtained an absolute majority with 133 of the 188 seats in the National Assembly. With regard to domestic and cross-border security, the peace process has been encouraging and is proceeding under politically favourable circumstances. Both the legislative and the presidential elections took place without clashes, to the satisfaction of all international observers and opposition party leaders.

96. With regard to security, an extensive discernment programme has begun in N'Djamena and will be extended throughout the country.

V. Implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative

• Status of signatures and ratifications of the Kinshasa Convention

97. The Committee took note that all 11 States members of the Committee had signed the Convention.

98. It also welcomed the efforts under way by the competent authorities of all the signatories of the Kinshasa Convention to achieve its swift ratification so that it can enter into force no later than the ceremony commemorating the Committee's twentieth anniversary, planned for December 2012 in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo.

99. The Committee also welcomed the subregional seminar to raise awareness among government experts, parliamentarians and civil society organizations of Central Africa about the Kinshasa Convention, held from 14 to 16 November 2011 in Brazzaville by the ECCAS Secretariat in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of the Congo and with financial support from the European Union. The purpose of this seminar was to increase the involvement of all stakeholders, in order to achieve the ratification of this important instrument by their respective Governments.

• Implementation of the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa

100. The Committee took note of the measures taken by the ECCAS Secretariat to internalize the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa through a meeting of the Defence and Security Committee of COPAX held in July 2011 in Douala, Cameroon.

101. Furthermore, the Republic of Angola, which had formally received the document on the Code of Conduct at the Defence and Security Committee meeting in Douala, has submitted it to the Chief of the General Staff of its army for evaluation and consideration.

102. The Committee also noted that the Republic of the Congo had already taken the relevant provisions of the Code of Conduct into account in the regulations for its defence and security forces. A standing technical committee for education on international humanitarian and human rights law was established within the security forces by Decree No. 2007-159 of 14 February 2007. One of the missions of this Committee is to hold training seminars on international humanitarian law for instructors.

103. A training course for international law instructors was held from 24 to 28 January 2011, with the participation of six officers from the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

104. Seminars to raise awareness are planned for such paramilitary services as customs agents and park rangers.

105. The Committee was informed that in the Central African Republic a code of professional ethics for forest rangers has been developed which takes into account the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa.

106. The Committee once again welcomed the willingness of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa to assist Member States, in collaboration with the ECCAS Secretariat, in dissemination and training on the Code of Conduct. It reaffirmed the importance of the Code of Conduct as a tool for consolidating democratic governance of the security sector in Central Africa.

VI. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa

- **Implementation of the Brazzaville Programme of Priority Activities (proliferation of small arms and light weapons and disarmament of civilian populations)**

107. The Committee took note with interest of the briefing by the Republic of Angola on the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in its territory. It also heard a description of the measures taken to address the problem through the continuing implementation of a programme of collection of arms from the civilian population consisting of four stages: (a) awareness-raising; (b) voluntary arms collection; (c) forced arms collection; (d) assessment of all activities carried out. The programme being carried out by Angola is at the stage of forced arms collection, although awareness-raising is ongoing.

108. During the period 2008-2011, the National Commission, aside from specific arms collection activities, undertook advocacy with the competent authorities for a revision of national laws concerning the use and bearing of firearms, granting of licences to private security companies, and the control and taxation of armouries or weapons depots.

109. In statistical terms, during the period 2008 to November 2011, Angola collected a total of 81,569 weapons, 44,998 chargers, 402,937 munitions and 12,701 explosives. The majority of these arms have been destroyed.

110. The Committee also listened with interest to the briefing by the Central African Republic on the measures taken by the competent authorities to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The Committee also took note of the presentation by the Central African Republic describing how the National Commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons for disarmament and reintegration (CNPDR) had completed the Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons Project in June 2011, which had been implemented by means of funding from Japanese Cooperation. This project, with funds managed by UNDP, allowed 522 civilians to turn over to the Commission over 430 weapons and 120,000 munitions in exchange for development kits.

111. In October 2011, the Sixth Ministerial Meeting of the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons, held in Djibouti, announced that the Central African Republic had joined the Regional Centre; it subsequently sent two missions to Bangui in November 2011. The first mission was able to hold a workshop on dissemination of the guide to best practices in disarmament and on capacity-building for members of the National Commission, with the aim of promoting better understanding of the Nairobi Protocol. The second mission, composed of the Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary of the Regional Centre, came to Bangui to make contact with members of the Central African Government to brief them on how the Centre functioned.

112. A vast campaign to raise awareness among the public and the defence and security forces about small arms and light weapons was organized by the National Commission in security triangles 5 and 6 of the International Conference on the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa Region. It addressed the dangers of the proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons as well as the need for strict border control.

113. As for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process being implemented under the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 21 June 2008, there has been considerable progress, since out of the 8,000 former combatants from five political-military groups who signed the Agreement, over 4,700 have already been disarmed and demobilized in the northwest of the country, with 3,558 weapons collected. The next stage of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process will address former combatants in the north central and north-eastern areas.

114. With regard to the database, the defence and security forces now have an electronic marking machine provided by the Regional Centre to enable better monitoring and control of small arms and light weapons.

115. Concerning the reform of the security sector, which also includes the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the fight against small arms and light weapons, short-term activities in security sector reform, executed exclusively with State budget funds, have produced results that were commended by a team of international evaluators. Medium-term reforms are included in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper — second generation and will be implemented as part of a consolidated national strategy for security sector reform. The Standing Technical Secretariat requested assistance from the Security Institutions Unit of BINUCA in the consolidation of this strategy.

116. With regard to disarmament, the Republic of the Congo has conducted one operation during the March to November 2011 period, which led to the collection of 746 firearms, 54 bladed weapons and 113,420 munitions and explosives.

117. Nevertheless, a final campaign is planned, after which the end of disarmament operations in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in the Congo will be officially declared.

118. The Government of the Republic of the Congo is committed to combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in its territory.

119. The Government of Burundi adopted a national action plan 2011-2015 to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and for civilian

disarmament, which was officially launched by His Excellency the First Vice-President of the Republic on 23 September 2011.

120. The campaign to collect weapons still in the possession of civilians is ongoing. Since the Sao Tome meeting, 144 rifles, 534 grenades and 45,568 cartridges have been collected. Moreover, four awareness-raising workshops on gender and small arms and light weapons have been held, 47 per cent of national police weapons have been marked and three modern armouries equipped with racks for proper storage of weapons owned by the State have been built.

121. Lastly, the Committee welcomed the progressive establishment and launch of operations of the Small Arms and Light Weapons Unit in the ECCAS Secretariat. It welcomed the activities already executed, in particular the drafting and publication of the "Practical Guide to the Kinshasa Convention for Parliamentarians", as well as the technical and financial support provided to the Central African Action Network on Small Arms for the convening of its first regular general assembly in Bangui from 30 November to 3 December 2011.

122. The Committee listened with interest to a presentation by the Network (see attachment II).

- **Briefing by the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs**

123. The Committee followed with interest the briefing by the Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa on the latest international developments in the area of disarmament and arms control. The briefing focused on weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and conventional weapons.

124. In that context, and with regard to conventional weapons, the Committee took note of the fact that in September 2011, UNREC, in collaboration with the African Union and the Government of Togo, held a meeting of government experts on the African strategy on small arms and light weapons and the African common position on the Arms Trade Treaty.

125. Furthermore, the United Nations was preparing to hold a preparatory meeting on the Arms Trade Treaty from 13 to 17 February 2012, in advance of the conference of Member States planned for New York from 2 to 27 July 2012, as well as the review conference on progress in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

126. The issue of securing stockpiles of conventional weapons remains a major concern for the international community. A large amount of the ammunition circulating among non-governmental actors seems to have been diverted from government security forces — proof of the urgent need to better secure ammunition stockpiles. Under the UN Safer*G*uard programme, the United Nations has developed a technical guide on international munitions for better management and security of conventional ammunition stockpiles.

127. In connection with the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba making Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone, the Committee was informed that the African Union had established the African Commission on Nuclear Energy, headquartered in South Africa. The African Union Commission had also requested UNREC to

provide training for the 15 members of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy. All the States of Central Africa have signed this Treaty and five (Burundi, Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Rwanda) have ratified it.

128. The Director of UNREC also informed the Committee of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1977 (2011) on 20 April 2011. This resolution extends the mandate of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) for 10 years, until April 2021, and reiterates the provisions of resolution 1540 (2004) relating to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors. He drew attention to the low number of national reports submitted by the Central African States in implementation of that resolution.

129. The Committee also urged UNREC to continue providing its various forms of assistance to African States to help them harmonize their national laws on small arms and light weapons, develop training modules for security forces on the subject of arms control, and design and develop trade management software and databases on national laws and regulations concerning firearms.

VII. Promotion of peace and combating insecurity and crime in Central Africa

• Maritime piracy in Central Africa

130. The Committee reiterated its concern at the continued acts of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and strongly condemned them. It welcomed the steps taken by ECCAS, ECOWAS and the United Nations to coordinate activities to counter these acts, in particular by holding an international conference on the issue in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

131. In that regard, it took note of the technical meeting planned for 14 to 16 February 2012 in Cotonou among representatives of ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Gulf of Guinea Commission, the West and Central African Maritime Organization, the International Maritime Organization, the African Union and the United Nations.

132. The Committee expressed its particular gratitude for the support of the United States of America, Gabon and Nigeria for the adoption by the United Nations Security Council at its 6645th meeting of resolution 2018 (2011) establishing a framework to combat acts of maritime piracy committed off the coast of the Gulf of Guinea. The Committee was pleased that this resolution was in keeping with the strategy for securing the vital maritime interests of the ECCAS members of the Gulf of Guinea Commission, and was based on the principles of COPAX in harmony with the concerns of ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission.

133. The Committee was also pleased that the United Nations Secretary-General had sent an evaluation mission from 7 to 24 November 2011 to examine the threat posed by acts of piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea and to seek the best means to put an end to that phenomenon.

134. This multisectoral mission travelled to Cotonou, then to Abuja to meet with ECOWAS representatives, and next to Libreville and Luanda to meet with representatives of ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission respectively.

135. The Committee took note of the tour of member States of ECCAS made by its Secretary-General to promote the implementation of the strategy to combat maritime

piracy in Central Africa. The Committee reiterated its recommendation to the ECCAS Secretariat and member States to accelerate the implementation of that strategy, including the establishment of the Central African Regional Centre for Maritime Security, the Multi-national Coordination Centres and the Maritime Operations Centres as soon as possible.

136. The Committee remains seized of the question and awaits the report and recommendations from this mission.

137. In addition, the Committee followed with interest the address by the head of the delegation of Cameroon, on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cameroon, concerning maritime piracy. That address reaffirmed the information contained in the previous statements by Cameroon on that subject.

138. The delegation of Gabon made a statement during the consideration of this item to report on its membership in the Security Council during 2010-2011. It reported in detail about the measures taken by the Council to combat the LRA, as well as maritime piracy and security.

- **Illegal exploitation of natural resources**

139. The States took note of the information paper drafted by UNREC on the initiatives taken in Africa and elsewhere to combat the illegal exploitation of natural resources, including the Final Declaration of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held on 15 December 2010 in Lusaka. They reaffirmed that this phenomenon has a true negative impact on peace and security in Central Africa and affects several areas.

140. They stated that the illegal exploitation of natural resources had financed the conflicts that had taken place in the region, particularly in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

141. The Committee welcomed the initiatives taken at the international and subregional levels to monitor the problem. In particular, it encouraged States members to continue to give priority importance to the implementation of a certain number of instruments: the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region; the Regional Programme of Action for Economic Development and Regional Integration; the proposal concerning the Regional Mechanism for Natural Resource Certification; the Conakry Declaration signed by 17 organizations at the Regional Seminar on the Exploitation of Natural Resources and Rights of Riparian Communities which took place in Conakry from 13 to 15 March 2011, on the initiative of the International Trade Centre for Development and Global Rights.

142. The Committee also expressed appreciation for the bilateral efforts made by some member States and welcomed the commitment of the European Union, which had signed three bilateral voluntary agreements with Ghana (2009), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2010) and Cameroon (2010) for the purpose of guaranteeing the legal origins of wood products imported into the European Union, in order to combat illegal exports.

VIII. Impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa

143. The States took note of the report drafted by UNREC on the impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa. There was an exchange of views

among States on this phenomenon, which represents a real threat to institutional stability and public tranquillity.

144. The Committee expressed concern at the degradation of drinking water resources, the decline in food production, the increasing number of storms and floods, migrations, longer and more severe dry seasons, irregular and torrential rainfall, flooding, landslides, deforestation, etc., which are weakening the stability of States.

145. In addition, the Committee welcomed the initiatives and processes established in recent years by States, international institutions or donors to address these issues.

146. The States reaffirmed the importance of the Central African Forests Commission, the Observatory for the Forests of Central Africa, the Congo Basin Forests and Climate Change Adaptation, Organization for the Conservation of African Wildlife, the Conference on Humid and Dense Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa and the Central Africa Regional Programme for the Environment.

IX. Implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/189

147. The Committee followed with interest the presentation made by the Gabonese delegation on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/189 entitled "International Widows' Day".

148. Under General Assembly resolution 65/189, "International Widows' Day" is henceforth observed on 23 June each year.

149. The rights of this social group as well as those of orphans, although guaranteed by some Constitutions or laws (penal codes and civil codes, inter alia) and several international conventions, in particular human rights instruments (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Convention on the Rights of the Child), continue to be negatively affected, and those groups suffer repeated mistreatment and dispossession in many States.

150. The fight for recognition of the rights of these social groups remains a concern of the international community.

151. Gabon, which initiated this resolution, along with the international community, observed 23 June 2011 as the first "International Widows' Day", under the patronage of Ms. Sylvia Bongo Odimba, First Lady of Gabon.

152. In New York, events included an art exhibition by the renowned artist Yoko Ono at United Nations Headquarters, attended by representatives of UN-Women Michelle Bachelet and Monika Bihlmaier, its Director and Africa programme specialist, respectively. A conference organized by the First Lady and Michelle Bachelet brought together such prominent guests as Lord Raj Loomba, creator of the Loomba Foundation, a British charitable organization that has been campaigning for widows since 1997, and its President, Cherie Blair, wife of the former British Prime Minister; Amir Dossal, Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Partnerships, and Ban Soon-taek, wife of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

153. The conference, chaired by Gillian Tett of the *Financial Times*, was also attended by experts, representatives of diplomatic missions, United Nations agencies, international organizations and the media.

154. In Libreville, the First Lady, in the presence of Ms. Cherie Blair and Ms. Diana Ofwona, Regional Director of UN-Women for Central Africa, and Lord Loomba, observed International Widows' Day. It was marked by a symbolic march of solidarity to draw the attention of the public to the importance of the day; the opening of the "Mbandja" centre with the goal of building capacity in Gabonese civil society to provide support and advice to individuals affected and made vulnerable by personal tragedies, such as widows; the holding of a symposium where experts highlighted the situation of widows in Gabon and took steps to strengthen existing legislation in that area; the establishment of the "Akassi" mechanism to assist vulnerable individuals through granting microcredits that allowed them to create income-generating activities and provide a livelihood. A guided tour of a crafts fair featuring items produced by women also took place to mark the Day.

155. It was noted that the observance of the Day was in the early stages. The following year States would once again gather to evaluate progress and continue their noble efforts to help widows and orphans.

X. Implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) on women, peace and security, and of General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

156. The Committee reaffirmed the complementary nature of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) as well as General Assembly resolution 65/69, and emphasized that these resolutions are essential tools for the prevention and resolution of conflicts and for peacebuilding and reconstruction in Central Africa.

157. In that connection, the Committee noted with great interest the communication from the Central African Republic concerning the incorporation of the gender dimension and involvement of women in the promotion of peace, security and disarmament.

158. In the Central African Republic, women had played an important role in the resolution of the various military and political crises the country had experienced. Although it had adhered to the relevant conventions and United Nations resolutions, the Central African Republic must make further efforts to include women in the decision-making process. In that regard, a strategy and plan of action had been developed that were designed to involve Central African women in structures for decision-making and conflict prevention and resolution, as well as to foster their financial independence.

159. The Committee also emphasized the need to establish national plans of action within member States. In that connection, it requested UNOCA to assist member States in developing and adopting national plans of action.

XI. Briefing by bodies with observer status with the Committee

160. The Committee noted with interest the briefing by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) and welcomed its contribution to the efforts to strengthen peace and security in that country.

161. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the quality of support that BINUCA had provided to the Central African Republic under its mandate since its establishment. It welcomed the efforts in the areas of electoral reform, mediation and the implementation of the Peace Agreement between the Government and the political and military groups present in the country.

162. The Committee encouraged BINUCA to continue its support for initiatives aimed at the consolidation of peace and reconciliation through the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and security sector reform, as well as the restoration of State authority and the promotion of the rule of law, in order to lay the foundations for sustainable development in the Central African Republic.

163. The Committee heard with interest the presentation of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, which was celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2011. It expressed appreciation for the manner in which the Centre was working towards its goals.

164. The Committee noted that past or ongoing conflicts pose enormous challenges to the stability of the States of the subregion, especially in the areas of human rights, democracy and administration of justice.

165. The Committee further noted that the realization of economic, social and cultural rights remained a major challenge throughout the countries of the subregion, to the extent that it could prevent the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Moreover, discrimination and marginalization, including discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, health, social status or political affiliation and nationality, continue to be a persistent source of concern in the subregion, where population movements caused by conflicts and economic difficulties have further reinforced discrimination against migrant workers and their families.

166. The Committee also noted that despite the high number of ratifications of international and regional human rights treaties, their implementation in the subregion remains very uneven, given the general context of structural weaknesses of States and civil society organizations.

167. The Committee recommended that member States as well as other stakeholders should take all necessary measures to implement the principle instruments for the promotion and protection of human rights.

168. The Committee again encouraged the Centre to continue its assistance to intergovernmental organizations in the subregion, State institutions and civil society organizations in the area of human rights and democracy in Central Africa.

169. The Committee also heard with great interest the presentation by the African Union on its peace and security activities, particularly those established for the countries of Central Africa. In that connection, the Committee noted that the

countries of Central Africa, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Chad in particular, are an important item on the agenda of the Peace and Security Council.

170. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the recent combined presidential and legislative elections had revealed just how fragile the peace remained. These elections should allow peace to be consolidated, national reconciliation to be strengthened, the democratic process to be pursued and the foundations for sustainable economic and social development to be laid.

171. In the Central African Republic, an atmosphere of calm continues to prevail following the signing of the ceasefire agreement between the Government and the CPJP, the final rebel movement that has not yet joined the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and following the agreement between the latter and the UFDR, whose attacks last September resulted in many victims and contributed to the degradation in the humanitarian situation in the country. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process is also moving forward despite the delays experienced to date. Nevertheless, it is to be deplored that rebels led by General Baba Ladé have come in to the country from Chad and continue to commit reprisals against the people. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform programmes deserve particular attention by the Government and the international community in order to accelerate the process and allow the country to meet these security challenges.

172. With regard to Chad, the restoration of normal relations between Chad and Sudan nearly three years ago has allowed a glimpse of the possibility of sustainable peace. However, the effects of the Sudanese crisis, not only in Darfur but also the strained relations between South Sudan and Sudan, continue to have a negative impact on Chad and on the Central Africa region as a whole.

173. The Committee noted with concern the actions of the LRA, which continues to ravage the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, causing great loss of human life, rapes, kidnappings and mass displacements of population.

174. The African Union has recently taken appropriate measures through the appointment of Mr. José Madeira of Mozambique as Special Envoy, the imminent establishment of a joint coordination mechanism and a regional intervention force with a mandate to strengthen operational capacity in countries affected by LRA atrocities; creation of an environment conducive to the stabilization of affected areas freed from LRA atrocities, and facilitation of the transport of humanitarian assistance to the affected areas.

175. The African Union is continuing its partnership with the European Union under the programme to facilitate peace in Africa, in particular for support to the activities of the ECCAS peacebuilding mission.

176. With regard to the planned disengagement of this mission, the African Union is in the process of studying the possibility of strengthening the liaison office in Bangui to accompany the disengagement process with civil and political activities in order better to prepare for the withdrawal of the mission.

177. The problem as a whole is summarized in the Continental Peace and Security Architecture, a component of which remains the regional brigades of the African Standby Force, in which Central Africa is actively involved.

178. The latest Amani Africa cycle, held in Addis Ababa with participation from the subregion, gave a comprehensive overview of this continental approach to questions of peace and security.

179. The African Union will continue to support the efforts being made in the countries of the subregion, with a view to strengthening the democratic process and creating the conditions for sustainable peace.

180. The Committee also followed with interest the presentation by UNOCA on its activities since its establishment on 2 March 2011 in Libreville, Gabon. In that regard, the Committee took note of its new responsibilities, in particular those having to do with the Committee Secretariat and the coordination of United Nations system activities in countries affected by the actions of the LRA. The Committee was informed of the courtesy visits made by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Central Africa and head of UNOCA to the countries of the subregion, as well as the contacts established with representatives of organizations in the subregion and other relevant partners in Central Africa.

181. During those visits, questions of peace and security affecting the subregion were emphasized. Those questions include cross-border insecurity, the circulation of small arms and light weapons, trafficking in persons, child labour, the threat of terrorism, particularly from Boko Haram and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, the impact of the situation in Libya on the subregion, maritime piracy and insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, the harmful consequences of the actions of armed groups for the civilian population, in particular the LRA, election-related violence, etc.

182. The Committee was informed of the seminar organized by UNOCA on 10 and 11 October 2011 in Libreville on the topic "The work of the United Nations in Central Africa: strengthening subregional efforts for peace and security", which brought together the representatives of the Secretary-General and the resident coordinators of the subregion.

183. The Committee welcomed the UNOCA seminar, which had provided food for thought on the way in which the various United Nations system bodies could harmonize their activities in the areas of peace, security, development and the stability of the subregion.

184. Special emphasis was placed on the Committee's operations, taking into account the relevant provisions of the Libreville Declaration concerning the financial contributions of member States.

185. The Committee took note of the briefing by the Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States on the strategic framework of its priority activities in the area of combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the subregion. The briefing focused on six main points.

186. The first point had to do with building the institutional capacity of the ECCAS Secretariat, public institutions in signatory States of the Kinshasa Convention and civil society organizations in Central Africa under the Action Network for Small Arms in Central Africa. The second dealt with advocacy and awareness-raising among Governments and the people regarding weapons-related dangers; the third

priority of ECCAS was the elaboration of educational tools on the flow of illicit small arms and light weapons in the subregion.

187. The fourth point concerned training for the main stakeholders: the armed and security forces, national commissions, parliamentarians, governmental experts and non-governmental organizations working in the field of disarmament and arms control. The fifth priority had to do with the development of operational mechanisms for the benefit of States in the subregion, for instance: marking, tracing, brokerage, exchange of information, management and security of stockpiles, registration, collection and destruction of arms. Lastly, the sixth area for ECCAS intervention was the strengthening of international cooperation and development of many-sided strategic partnerships.

XII. Report by the Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States on the institutional evolution of subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms, including ratification of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa and of non-aggression and mutual assistance agreements, and the Central Africa multinational force as well as the development of strategic partnerships

188. The Committee decided to defer the consideration of this item to its thirty-fourth meeting.

XIII. Review of the financial situation of the Committee: Implementation of the Libreville Declaration by member States

189. The Committee welcomed the contributions to its Trust Fund by the Republic of Angola, the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. Delegations then participated in an exchange of views and were encouraged by the Committee to make their respective contributions on a regular basis. The Committee also called on other United Nations Member States and donors to make financial contributions to the Committee's Trust Fund.

XIV. Preparations for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

190. The Committee took note of the Secretariat proposals for the preparations for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which were adopted by the meeting of ambassadors of member States in November 2011 in New York. The celebration, which would take place at the thirty-fifth ministerial meeting of the Committee in December 2012, would include a solemn observance preceded by two days of expert meetings on the topic "Two decades of peacebuilding in Central Africa: the contribution and perspectives of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa".

191. The Committee suggested that a preparatory committee composed of members of the bureau and representatives of UNOCA and the host country should be established. The Committee Secretariat would provide the technical coordination for the preparations under the leadership of the Chair of the preparatory committee, which would also address the matter of financing for the observance.

192. The Republic of the Congo would host the activities in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

XV. Place and date of the next meeting

193. The Committee decided to hold its thirty-fourth ministerial meeting in Bujumbura, Republic of Burundi.

194. The Secretariat would inform member States of the exact dates in due course.

XVI. Other matters

195. The Committee took note of the transfer of the duties of Secretariat of the Committee from the Regional Centre to UNOCA.

196. In that connection, it commended the work of UNREC over the past years which had allowed the Committee to achieve convincing results. It took the opportunity to express its warmest gratitude to Mr. Ivor Richard Fung, Director of UNREC, who had served with efficiency and devotion as the Secretary of the Committee.

197. The Committee also took note of the appointment of Mr. Paul Goa Zoumanigui, Chief Policy Adviser and head of the policy section of UNOCA as Secretary of the Committee and offered him its full support.

XVII. Adoption of the report of the thirty-third ministerial meeting

198. The Committee adopted the present report on 9 December 2011.

C. Expression of thanks

The following expression of thanks was read out:

We, representatives of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, gathered on the occasion of the thirty-third ministerial meeting, from 5 to 9 December 2011 in Bangui, Central African Republic;

Reaffirm our attachment to the ideals of peace, stability and security that are so necessary for our respective peoples and for the socio-economic development of our subregion;

Welcome the efforts made by our countries, individually and collectively, to promote peace, security, stability and development;

Welcome the atmosphere of conviviality, brotherhood and mutual trust that has prevailed throughout our work;

Express our sincere thanks and our profound gratitude to His Excellency Mr. François Bozize, President of the Central African Republic, and to the Government and people of the Central African Republic, for the warm and fraternal welcome we have received during our stay in the Central African Republic."

Bangui, 9 December 2011

Attachment I

Declaration on a road map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa

Preamble

The United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa,

Considering that certain Central African countries bordering North Africa are suffering the consequences of cross-border insecurity and armed violence,

Considering also the fragility of State institutions and the lack of the requisite technical and financial means to address international terrorism,

In the light of the determination of the States of Central Africa to strengthen security along their borders in order to combat organized crime effectively,

Having regard to the need to combat such violence, including violence against women, as set forth in Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009),

Noting that extremist rebel movements are linked to terrorist groups through business networks,

Guided by Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) adopted on 28 September 2001, 1540 (2004) adopted on 28 April 2004 and 1977 (2011) adopted on 20 April 2011, on the non-proliferation of weapons and their possession by non-State actors,

Building on the Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, General Assembly resolution 60/288 and African Union decision AU/Dec.311 (XV), adopted by the African Union Summit at Kampala, Uganda, in July 2010,

Also building on the provisions of the statute of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa recommending cooperation in the settlement of disputes,

Recalling such regional instruments as the East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative and the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative,

ADOPTS this road map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa.

Aim

The road map will contribute to the strengthening of customs, military, police, economic and social cooperation pursuant to the bilateral and multilateral agreements and institutional mechanisms of the subregion.

Implementation

The road map will be implemented at the national, Community and international levels.

National level

- Reduction in external factors linked to terrorism: poverty, corruption;
- Restoration and strengthening of political and administrative authority throughout our territories;
- Strengthening of controls at land borders;
- Safeguarding and enhancing financial oversight in connection with economic activities, in particular investment in the mining sector and trade;
- Identification of front companies established in partnership with nationals;
- Validation of the financing and supply chain for certain products;
- Monitoring the origin and movement of funds;
- Strengthening intelligence services;
- Controlling the possession and use of weapons;
- Strengthening the capabilities of the security forces in implementation of the laws on the carrying of weapons.

Community level

- Increased cooperation between States;
- Extension of the operational scope of this road map to other neighbouring States that are not members of the Committee;
- Establishment of a common legal instrument on measures to prevent and counter terrorism and on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction within the Community;
- Envisaging security as a component of public policy and governance;
- Strengthening of information exchange between the intelligence services of member States.

International cooperation

- The Committee requests the support of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) and the international community in implementing this road map;
- The Committee invites its member States to strengthen international cooperation with other States and relevant institutions with valid experience in counter-terrorism and non-proliferation, including the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism, based in Algiers, Algeria.

Done at Bangui

8 December 2011

Attachment II

Statement at the thirty-third ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Central African Action Network on Small Arms

I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to you for having invited us here today. It is a token of recognition that, we trust, marks the beginning of a fruitful and constructive dialogue between civil society and the Governments of Central Africa on the important and delicate question of arms control and disarmament. You will share our belief that this dialogue will allow us to combine our efforts to resolve the problem of small arms and light weapons and their deleterious impact on the development of our subregion.

We endorse the analyses of the sociopolitical and security contexts in the subregion made by the government experts, a framework which inspires our commitment to control small arms and light weapons.

Under the leadership of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), civil society organizations in Central Africa have been involved in the formulation of the Kinshasa Convention.

In October 2009 at Lomé, Women in Alternative Action Cameroon represented civil society in the subregion at the meeting of independent experts to review the preliminary draft of the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Following the twenty-ninth ministerial meeting of your Committee, held at N'Djamena in November 2009, the civil society organizations members of the International Action Network on Small Arms took an active part in consultations held at the national level with a view to enriching the Convention.

At the thirtieth meeting of the Committee, at Kinshasa in April 2010, where the Convention was adopted, Central African civil society participated through Women of the Media for Justice in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and addressed States members of the Committee at the biennial preparatory meeting on the United Nations Implementation Plan for the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, organized in conjunction with the thirtieth meeting of the Committee.

In September 2010 at Lomé, the International Action Network on Small Arms programme manager for Africa played an active part in the meeting of experts to consider the Implementation Plan for the Kinshasa Convention.

In response to the urgent need for coordinated action at the subregional level to combat the proliferation and illegal circulation of small arms and light weapons, the Central African civil society organizations members of the International Action Network on Small Arms, which had long acted alone in isolation without regional coordination, in October 2010 at Libreville, Gabon, joined with other actors in Africa to establish the Central African Action Network on Small Arms with a view to contributing to human security in the Central African subregion.

The Central African Action Network on Small Arms may be young, but it brings together organizations with proven expertise in advocacy and activities to control small arms and light weapons. In the year since its establishment, in addition to building a collective dynamic and conducting capacity-building activities, it has been present at the major meetings on small arms and light weapons and the Arms Trade Treaty. Through its members it has also conducted a number of activities in the various countries of the subregion. Among others, I might mention participation in the formulation of the Kinshasa Convention, grass-roots consultations on the Convention during this year's Global Week of Action against Gun Violence, and participation in the work of the United Nations Preparatory Committee for the Arms Trade Treaty in New York, in the training of African women leaders in reform of the security sector and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, in the work of the African Union on the adoption of a common position on the Arms Trade Treaty and the African Union plan of action on small arms and light weapons, and in the subregional seminar on raising awareness of the Kinshasa Convention attended by government experts, parliamentarians and civil society organizations of Central Africa.

While I have the floor I wish to make a solemn appeal to the member States of the Committee to facilitate recognition of the Central African Action Network on Small Arms in their respective countries and to integrate the member organizations of the Network in the various frameworks for consultation at the national and regional levels, and to include them in national, subregional and international meetings on the question of the control of weapons and disarmament.

We need to consider the contribution of civil society to these efforts, it being clearly understood that the complex and multi-dimensional nature of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is having an increasing impact on communities and individuals. Efforts to control small arms and light weapons necessitate a multisectoral approach encompassing a broad range of measures and synergy between key actors, including civil society organizations.

Participation by the Action Network is pursuant to the Kinshasa Convention, article 19, paragraph 2, of which relates to the need to involve civil society in developing awareness-raising programmes intended to promote a culture of peace, and article 29, paragraph 3, of which provides for the establishment of a civil society network in Central Africa on small arms and light weapons. Through our participation we wish to work for ownership of the Convention by the peoples of Central Africa.

Given the situation with regard to small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, ratification and implementation of the Kinshasa Convention is becoming a matter of urgency. The recent massacre in Gatumba, Burundi, and the rapes at gunpoint in the Central African Republic and in the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are clear indications of this. The Action Network appeals to the State parties to undertake and accelerate this process.

We welcome the continually reaffirmed desire of the States of Central Africa to see the arms trade regulated, as stated in the Sao Tome Declaration on a Central African Common Position on the Arms Trade Treaty, issued on 16 March 2011 at the thirty-second meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. This common position is based on the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their

Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly. We urge all the States of Central Africa to commit without delay and without reservation to a robust and binding arms trade treaty regulating small arms and light weapons.

For its part, the Central African Action Network on Small Arms stands ready to contribute, in collaboration with the States of Central Africa, to the formulation of a rigorous and muscular arms trade treaty and to work for its ratification and implementation.

In concluding, I wish to thank the Government of the Central African Republic for having facilitated the work of the regular General Assembly of the Central African Action Network on Small Arms at Bangui from 30 November to 3 December 2011.